

# Kingdom Security

## *Daniel 2:31-49*

On this Father's Day, I am doing what many of you are doing . . . I am thinking about my dad and I am missing him. He gained his entrance to his forever home 14 years ago and when I think of him, I cannot help but smile in gratitude to the LORD. My dad blessed me in ways too innumerable to name, but this morning I am sharing five of those ways for a couple of reasons.

First, I do enjoy thinking about my dad and it gives me pleasure to share a bit with you. No question that part of my motivation is a bit selfish.

Second, how my dad blessed me became my foundation for how I strive to bless my children and my grandchildren. I pray that if you are a dad or a grandparent that some of the ways that my dad related to me will stimulate you in your pursuit of being a godly influence on your children and grandchildren.

### **Five Life-Imparting Gifts a Dad Gives to His Children**

**Gift #1: My dad loved me and he told me that he loved me.**

**Gift #2: My dad loved my mom and told me how much he loved her.**

**Gift #3: My dad loved Jesus' church and he told me how much he loved Jesus' church.**

**Gift #4: My dad loved God and he told me how much he loved God.**

**Gift #5: My dad showed me how to think about all of life with God at the center.**

It is this last gift that connects us to our passage in Daniel 2 this morning. Daniel 2 teaches us a worldview . . . a way of seeing the world that frees us to be joyfully engaged with our world, yet frees us from being frustrated, angry, worried, consumed, anxious or embittered by our world.

Before I share a little more about my dad teaching me how to think about our world, I want to spend a couple minutes encouraging you dads and granddads regarding Gift #1. I know that this part is a parenthesis in my message. It not connected to the main point of Daniel 2, but I believe it is too practically important for me to pass by it. **My dad never heard his dad say the words, "I love you."** Not once in his whole life. I think that he did love my dad, but he never told him. My grandpa needed Jesus. God's grace transformed my dad right

before he married my mom. When he experienced Jesus' love for him, he was able to love me and to tell me that he loved me.

So frequent was my dad's tangible expression and verbal confession of his love for me, I have a hard time imagining what it would be like to be raised without that kind of affirmation. I know that many of you have lived your life without hearing those words from your dad. That is hard.

I guess my point is two-fold: **First, God can fill any empty place that our parents may have left in us.** We do not have to forever look back and wish that our childhood was not as broken. God's grace is sufficient for every need. My dad's life demonstrated that to me. **Secondly, those who have the Spirit of God are called by God to be His representatives to our children and grandchildren.** That is a big role, and one part of that role means that we tell them that we love them. God tells us that He loves us and we follow Him when we do the same with our kids.

For some of you, saying "I love you" is as natural as breathing. You tell your children that you love them over and over and over. Praise God. But for some of you, this seems like the hardest of things to do. Some of you may feel like the obstacle is as tall as Mt Everest . . . insurmountable. Won't you pray to God right now asking Him, *"Lord, thank you for loving me. Thank you for telling me that You love me. You have placed a love in my heart for my children and grandchildren. Will you give me the courage to tell them with words today?"* Perhaps your children are grown and the pattern of your whole relationship does not include these words. Perhaps today is the day of a new pattern. Perhaps your relationship with your children is broken. Perhaps the best way is by sending a letter that may not even be read. I do not know your specifics, but I know that this is a life-infusing gift to give. If God does give you courage and opportunity, do not muddy it up with any advice, any excuses, any correction, any negative connotation. Just simply tell them that you love them and that they are precious to you.

Now on to **Gift #5: My dad showed me how to think about all of life with God at the center.** Through my life my dad talked with me about God and about our world. **Far better than telling me WHAT TO THINK about important matters like morality, politics, religion, and relationships. My dad taught me HOW TO THINK about these matters.**

--He taught me that there is a God who is so big that He controls everything in this broken world.

--He taught me that eternity is always more valuable than time.

--He taught me not to expect this world to be righteous because the heart of man is filled with sin and darkness.

--He taught me that Jesus is the King of all Kings and that He would prevail.

--He taught me that salvation comes from the LORD alone and that I needed to look to Jesus.

--And he taught me God's Word is always and forever true, powerful and relevant.

**These cores truths become the foundation to help us know HOW to think about our broken and damaged world.** I pray that Daniel 2:31-49 will be extremely helpful this morning in laying a foundation for knowing how to think about the upcoming elections, about world events, about cultural changes. I am not going to tell you WHAT to think. **But I pray this passage will be a big help in knowing HOW TO THINK.**

**Today, so many believers are confused about how to think regarding politics, morality, religion and culture.** Some in their confusion have adopted the world's view of the world. They have so conformed to the world's way of thinking that it is difficult to discern that there is anything unique about a Christian worldview. On the other hand, other believers in their confusion have lost sight of the hope of the Gospel and live in a constant state of unrest, anger and worldly conflict. **Both of these options fall short of the Gospel promise for us.**

I pray that the truths revealed to Nebuchadnezzar over 2600 years ago will bring joy, peace, insight and worship to our hearts. I pray that while we appropriately invest some of our energy to make this world a bit better place, that we invest all of our lives in lifting up Jesus and seeking first His kingdom.

**Main Idea: God alone is in control of the kingdoms of this world. Though human kings are allowed to exercise authority for a time, Jesus will one day reign on the throne. His kingdom is the only kingdom that will endure forever.**

You remember from last week that God gives Nebuchadnezzar a nightmarish dream. The mighty emperor is nearly paralyzed with fear over the dream. The LORD then gives his servant Daniel the details of the dream and its meaning.

The dream is of a giant magnificent shining statue. This statue is standing right in front of Nebuchadnezzar. The statue is not moving or talking. Just standing The head of the statue is made of gold, its chest and arms are made of

silver, its middle and thighs are made of bronze, and its legs are made of iron mixed with clay.

We observe right away that the quality of each part of the statue is decreasing as we look at it from head to the feet. Yet while the glory is decreasing, the hardness is increasing. We also see that the statue is top heavy with a very fragile foundation.

As Nebuchadnezzar looks at the statue, a stone that was cut out without human hands hurtles through the air and strikes the image on its feet of iron and clay and smashes the feet in an instant. When the stone hits the statue the whole thing disintegrates into a pile of dust and the wind blows and the statue disappears . . . it is no more. Not even a trace is left behind. But the stone that strikes the image becomes a huge mountain . . . a mountain rising rapidly to fill the whole earth.

Wow! No wonder Nebuchadnezzar is disturbed! He knows that the dream is means something really dramatic for him and his kingdom.

But what does the dream mean? Thankfully God tells us!!

**Let us walk through the text and then I am going to draw five truths that help us to have tranquil hearts even while we see our world devolving into moral and spiritual darkness.**

*"Daniel 2:36 "This was the dream. Now we will tell the king its interpretation.*

*Daniel 2:37 You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, Daniel 2:38 and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the children of man, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the heavens, making you rule over them all—**you are the head of gold.***

**Nebuchadnezzar is building a kingdom that he intends to last forever.** He does not envision a time when his kingdom will fade from the earth. The capital of Nineveh is built to reveal her eternal glory. The capital is 200 square miles. Her walls are 40 feet tall and so thick that chariot races were held on the top of them. Her hanging gardens with terraced trees and flowers and man-made waterfalls are one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. This was a glorious kingdom and those living in that time could likely not imagine that this kingdom would come to an end.

Notice that Daniel is not afraid to tell Nebuchadnezzar that the God of heaven gave him this magnificent kingdom. It was not the glory or power of Nebuchadnezzar that caused him to rule, but the glory and power of God that put Nebuchadnezzar on the throne!

*Daniel 2:39 Another kingdom inferior to you shall arise after you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.*

Daniel prophecies about two other kingdoms that will follow after Babylon. We know them NOW to be the Medo-Persian Kingdom led by Darius and the Greek Kingdom led by Alexander the Great. But to Daniel these are yet future kingdoms.

Each of these kingdoms will have a beginning, a middle and an end. The Babylonian kingdom will last 87 years from 626-539 BC. The Medo-Persian empire will last 200 years from 539-330 BC. (See Daniel 5) The Greek empire will last 270 years or so from roughly 330 BC to 63 BC (See Daniel 8:20-21) Each kingdom would think that it would reign on earth forever.

*Daniel 2:40 And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things. And like iron that crushes, it shall break and crush all these. Daniel 2:41 And as you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom, but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the soft clay.*

Then a fourth kingdom will emerge and it will be the last earthly kingdom before God establishes His own. This is the Roman empire. This empire lasted over 500 years from 63 BC to 476 AD. The eastern part of the Roman empire known as the Byzantine era lasted until 1453 AD!

*Daniel 2:42 And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. Daniel 2:43 As you saw the iron mixed with soft clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay.*

Notice that this fourth kingdom is characterized by its strength and its internal weakness. It is an extremely harsh kingdom . . . hard like iron. Yet it is brittle because it is made of both iron and clay. It is a mixture of peoples and cultures, but not united as one.

**Though this kingdom is hundreds of years yet future to Daniel, the dream describes it so accurately! Internal struggles will be constant in this kingdom so**

much so that eventually in 286 AD, Emperor Diocletian divided the Roman empire into east and west with two capitals with two emperors. Rome in the West and Constantinople in the East.

**The big picture tells us of the futility of human governments to make the world a better place.** This dream refutes the evolutionary idea that human governments will find a way to bring lasting peace, prosperity, righteousness and justice to the world. In fact, they get increasingly worse in their iron like oppression of man and not increasingly better at making the world more lovely for the individuals.

*I've always felt the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the Government, and I'm here to help. Ronald Reagan*

*Daniel 2:44 **And in the days of those kings** the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, Daniel 2:45 just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.” (Daniel 2:36-45 [ESV](#))*

This is the key part of the dream’s revelation. It is the most important part for Nebuchadnezzar and for us! Yet we ask, *“What does this mean? What is the stone? What is the breaking into pieces of the statue? Have these events already happened or are they future?*

Part of the interpretation of the dream is fairly easy to discern. We correctly identify the stone that was cut from the mountain without hands as pointing to God’s Messiah . . . Jesus. He is referenced in a number of places as a stone or a rock.

*“The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” (Psalm 118:22 [ESV](#))*

*“therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’” (Isaiah 28:16 [ESV](#))*

Jesus points to these passages to teach us about Himself:

*“Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: “‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a*

people producing its fruits. And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”” (Matthew 21:42-44 [ESV](#))

The stone is Jesus and the mountain of the dream is Jesus’ kingdom. Not many disagree about this part of the interpretation.

But the more difficult question is, “Does this refer to what has already taken place? OR is this still something to come in the future?” I believe that this prophecy has partly been fulfilled, yet that the fulness of its description is yet to come.

Now we have a number of amillennial brothers and sisters that are part of our church family. I am glad that you are with us and hope that you feel loved and respected in a church that believes in a future, earthly millennial kingdom. I also hope that I give you some scripture to think over to reevaluate your position.

**Here is why I believe that part of this vision is yet to come.**

**First, the church has not destroyed the world’s kingdoms.** This is what the dream says will happen in the end. There has been no cataclysmic event that broke the nations into pieces and scattered them like chaff.

**Second, Jesus has not yet come in a sudden instant to confront and conquer the statue of the worldly kingdoms.** He came the first time to deal with our sin and to establish His church . . . a church that slowly and gradually has eternal influence in our world, but not power in our world.

Jesus speaks about a coming day when He will return to set up His kingdom on earth and Revelation points us to a future return of Jesus when He will bring swift judgment on the kingdoms of this world who oppose Him.

**Jesus’ prophecy in Matthew fits perfectly with this vision of Daniel 2.**

*“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:29-30 [ESV](#))*

*“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.” (Matthew 25:31-32 [ESV](#))*

Note that the God of heaven has not yet fulfilled what He said He would do . . . namely break in pieces all the kingdoms of this world in dramatic fashion. God

promised that the stone cut from a mountain by no human hand will hurtle through the air and then smash into the statue grinding it to dust. The effect will be that the kingdoms of the world will come to a dramatic end and that the LORD will establish HIS OWN kingdom to rule over the world.

When Daniel writes, “In those days of those kings” . . . I believe that he is talking about the time of the ten toes . . . a time when the last empire Rome is led by ten different rulers. And that this part of the dream is yet to come.

*A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”” (Daniel 2:36-45 [ESV](#))*

One value of Bible prophecy is that it brings calm to our hearts in time of chaos. Daniel was calmed when he was taken into captivity because he KNEW that the LORD had established the captivity for good.

### **Truths that teach us tranquility in turbulent times**

#### **Truth #1: God alone sets up kingdoms and God alone takes kingdoms down.**

**37** “You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory; **38** and wherever the sons of men dwell, *or* the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given *them* into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold.

Daniel courageously tells Nebuchadnezzar that he was not king because of his greatness, but that he was king because Yahweh, the God of heaven made him so. God is the one who sets one king up to power and pulls another king down from power. He holds all the kings of the earth in His hands.

At any other time the proud king would have put to death anyone who challenged his personal greatness so. But Nebuchadnezzar is awestruck by the truth of God.

**39** “And after you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth. **40** “Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces.

#### **Truth: God sovereignly controls all the kingdoms of this earth. Every part.**



## **Every day. Every way.**

I know that reading the newspaper or the news webpages can be unsettling. We read about Hamas and Iran and Russia and China and many other nations and wonder what our future will be. We read about our own leaders acting in unrighteousness.

God holds nations and the future in His hands. We need not fret, nor be troubled. God is in control of the kingdoms of this world. **This does not mean that we do nothing to make our world a better place.**

**--But it does mean that we relate to our world with a heart of peace and joy.**

**--It does mean that we invest more in making God's church strong in faith, in hope and in love!**

**--It does mean that we make the Gospel our foundational message to our lost world.**

*"remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'" (Isaiah 46:9-10 [ESV](#))*

## **Truth #2: God establishes specific manmade kingdoms to rule for a time.**

Wars are not won by chance, or even by might. History is not a record of man's accomplishments and failures, but of God's sovereign working in the affairs of fallen and sinful man.

**To think of our current national and international problems with God being in the center of our thoughts is fundamental to any wise and profitable insight we may have to our times.** The news channels do not give us that. The Bible gives us that. **Be careful that we spend more time listening to our favorite commentator than we spend in God's Word!!**

**God has not and will not ordain a manmade kingdom to rule His world forever. He places nations and kings on His stage to play a role in His story. Then He takes them off the stage.**

Every manmade kingdom is unrighteous. This does not mean that every manmade kingdom is EQUALLY unrighteous. Not one righteous kingdom in all the history of the world. Every manmade kingdom is temporary. Not one established by God to last forever.

I do pray that the LORD has more of a future for the USA. I love our country. I believe in her enough to be willing to die for her. I am proud that my

son is part of our USAF. I believe it is right as a citizen to labor for her prosperity. **Yet I also know that the USA is not God's kingdom. And that I must not invest my eternal hopes in her.** I must not believe that life depends on the next election cycle or upon decisions that flow from the Supreme Court, from Congress or from the White House. This is NOT to suggest that these decisions are inconsequential. These decision DO IMPACT the suffering of people. But these decisions are not definitive to our future!

Illustration: I talked much with my dad about politics. I loved his takes. Sometimes he would surprise me with his thoughts. Do you know what my dad is NOT doing right now? He is not thinking about November's election. I AM! But he is not.

**I bring that to mind to suggest a priority for us.** I wish to be faithful with the stewardship that God has given me for temporal matters. Part of that faithfulness is engagement with our present world. Part of that faithfulness is disengagement from our present world. Let us seek the LORD to get this right.

*"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4 [ESV](#))*

**Truth #3: God will set up a future kingdom that will never be destroyed.**

*"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever," (Daniel 2:44 [ESV](#))*

This is the main point of this dream. God wants Nebuchadnezzar to know it. He wants Daniel to know it. He wants us to know it.

Human government is temporary. It is not the final answer to man's big problems. Jesus is. Jesus' kingdom is. Let us not emotionally live as though the answer to our big problems is rooted in human government.

*"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their*

*faces and worshiped God, saying, "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign. The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."'" (Revelation 11:15-18 [ESV](#))*

#### **Truth #4: God will demolish all manmade kingdoms by His Son in an instant.**

The part of the dream that talks about iron mixed with clay refers to a future day when a renewed Roman empire will arise. It will have 10 toes . . . ten parts (individual countries with separate leaders) bound together for the purpose of power. Daniel will receive another prophecy that he will tell us in Daniel 7 about 10 horns. This future Roman-based kingdom will seek world dominion, but the 10 leaders will not be firmly held together.

What happens to this final Gentile kingdom? The stone . . . Jesus God's Messiah comes and strikes it and demolishes it.

*"just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold." (Daniel 2:45 [ESV](#))*

What a day that will be. Can you envision it?

*"Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords." (Revelation 19:11-16 [ESV](#))*

This is the king you want to follow! All other kings grow weak and fall off their throne . . . either from defeat or death. Only this king endures. Do you know Him?

#### **Truth #5: God is great and man is not.**

*He's got the whole world in his hands.  
He's got the whole world in his hands.*

*He's got the whole world in his hands.  
 He's got the whole world in his hands.  
 He's got you and me, brother, in his hands. . . .  
 He's got the whole world in his hands.*

*He's got our President and Congress in his hands . . .*

This truth impacted Nebuchadnezzar for a short time.

"Daniel 2:46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face and paid homage to Daniel, and commanded that an offering and incense be offered up to him. Daniel 2:47 The king answered and said to Daniel, "Truly, your God is God of gods and Lord of kings, and a revealer of mysteries, for you have been able to reveal this mystery.'" (Daniel 2:46-47 [ESV](#))

Next week, we discover that Nebuchadnezzar switched back to his old way of thinking. How about you? Easy to forget this!!!

**Conclusion: Our ultimate response is repentance. Repentance of our propensity to build our own kingdom. Repentance of our neglect of God's greatness. Repentance of our wayward sinfulness. Repentance of our lack of worship and faith in God's promises.**

*"But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. (Acts 3:18-22 [ESV](#))*

Jesus is the center of eternity.

*Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.' And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days. . . .God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.'" (Acts 3:22-26 [ESV](#))*